

The Circle

Volume 14 No. 2

Spring 1989

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Editor's Note

Well, here it is. The Spring 1989 issue of *The Circle*. A lot of people put a lot of time and energy into the final product, and they all have something to be proud of. I guess all editors have a different idea of what *The Circle* should be, and although you can't please everyone, I hope there is something in this issue that everyone will enjoy, or at least find interesting, amusing, or entertaining. Or at least find. Jimmy Weldon, a 1974 contributor, said *The Circle* is "an odd mutation, a creature so strange it frightens some, bores others, delights a few, and baffles most." It's your magazine. If there's something you don't like or do like, if you have suggestions or complaints or constructive criticism, we'll be glad to hear it. *The Circle* office is located in the Glomerata Suite in the basement of Foy Union. Stop by.

Sumarie Bass

Sumarie Bass

Cover by Lori West

The Circle, financed by student activity fees, serves as a forum for the writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse Auburn audience by providing a variety of articles, essays, short stories, art and photography. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student Communications) or those of the *The Circle* staff or editorial board.

The Circle

Volume 14, Number 2

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The Circle

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In the West Woods

by David Wimberley

This past winter quarter, the English Honorary, Sigma Tau Delta, sponsored an interdepartmental essay/fiction writing contest. Of thirty-one entries, the top five were given to Dr. Wehrs and Dr. Kicklighter for final judging. The Circle would like to present the first-place winner, David Wimberley.

I.

The sign was stapled to a broomstick plunged rudely into the center of the footpath, which led to a large, solid treehouse. The two brothers standing in front of the sign holding brushes, rollers, packets of coarse sandpaper, and cans of whitewash had crafted the treehouse during a first fortnight of June four years past. Before that fortnight of construction they had taken twice as long in searching for a worthy tree, and had finally selected a sturdy old pecan overlooking a short waterfall that murmured into a long, deep pool.

For the past four years, in winter chill as well as summer sun, they had scrupulously maintained their treehouse, and even maintained the habitat surrounding their treehouse. Any worn shingle, or broken board, or rusty latch, had been promptly relieved of duty. No flood debris from upstream had long cluttered their rippling, whirling pool. No fallen branches, or leaves, or pecans, or pine cones, or pine needles had long remained littering their grassy meadow, hemmed on one side by the smooth sloping red clay banks of the stream and on the other by high green banks of honeysuckle.

For four years they had fished and dived from the sundeck fifteen feet above the pool, and had tossed footballs and baseballs across the meadow, and had sheltered from cold winter winds and rains on the inside of the treehouse, and every spring had cleaned and whitewashed the outside. Now here was this sign fifty yards up the trail, bearing a boorish all caps message with no punctuation, orange letters on a black field:

NO TRESPASSING
KEEP OUT
CONSTRUCTION SITE

The younger brother, knowing his words did not matter, said, "I thought they had a ways to go yet in the east woods."

"They do, Anthony," Kevin replied calmly. "They do."

Anthony held Kevin's can of paint while Kevin uprooted the sign and tossed it into the brush. They proceeded down the trail in single file, Kevin leading. Anthony watched his big brother's heels and the tops of his own feet to avoid seeing the orange plastic ribbons, harbingers of the chainsaw and bulldozer, which marked most of the tall loblolly pines within ten feet of the trail. His feet step step stepped behind Kevin's heels; he watched them, not thinking, not acknowledging movement or the passing of time as if their feet were step step stepping always in the same place, same time. He ran abruptly into the back of Kevin when Kevin's heels quit step stepping and matched together stiffly as if they had unaccountably reached the wrong destination.

Kevin had stopped at the edge

of their grassy meadow. Across the familiar space the waterfall murmured into the pool as it always had. Above the pool the four limbs of the old pecan embraced the straight lines and symmetrical angles of the treehouse. Beyond Kevin, in the middle of their meadow, two men in T shirts, jeans and work boots sat on a downed pine tree. One of the men was smoking a cigarette, and one was eating a sandwich. An axe and a chainsaw lay on the ground in front of the men. The downed pine was stripped of its branches and sawed into sections, its sawdust blood in drifts near the cuts and sprinkled in the hair and on the clothes of the two men.

The man smoking the cigarette stood up. He was a permanently sunburned man with a grey stubbly beard and pale, watery blue eyes. When Kevin started forward again in a deliberate stride, Anthony following mechanically, the man jammed the cigarette between his teeth and said, not unkindly, "Where do you think you're going?"

Without slowing Kevin answered smartly, "We're going fishing, and a loud old man like you is liable to scare our fish away."

The old man glanced down at his still seated partner, a skinny, shrugging young man who seemed uninterested in enforcing rules. The old man muttered something short to the young man, tossed his cigarette resolutely to the ground, crossed his red arms, and said in a reconciliatory but firm tone, "Son, you're trespassing. You ain't supposed

to be here, and you know it full well. Now, this here may be your tree fort and fishing hole, but this here's also my job."

He paused, then added, "I don't say I like it."

When his big brother stopped just short of the old man and turned around, Anthony supposed the heady confrontation was all over and began to back away. But Kevin said, "Give me your shirt," and picked up the chainsaw. He had to repeat the directive before Anthony realized what was about to happen.

When Kevin held out, Mr. Pelzer agreed to develop all his property in the east woods before moving into the west woods; he said it was no matter to him which property made him money—he sold every lot he could clear.

Anthony was happy about the deal, happy that they had been able to save the west woods, but even from the moment Mr. Pelzer and Kevin shook hands over it, Anthony held reservations close to his heart—Kevin was working for the enemy; chopping down trees, butchering them, burning them.

"Son, you're trespassing. You ain't supposed to be here, and you know it full well."

He ripped the neck of his shirt with his teeth, tore a strip out and handed it proudly to Kevin, who had removed the gas cap and held the glowing cigarette ready. The old man made a move to stop them. Kevin shouldered him roughly aside and touched the red tip of the cigarette to the rag, which he had stuffed into the chainsaw's gasoline filler orifice.

At first nothing happened. Kevin fanned the cigarette with his breath. The rag caught fire with a percussive puff. Everyone bolted for the woods, the young man still clutching his thermos and the last corner of his sandwich.

After the explosion, the boys gathered the pieces of the chainsaw and piled them neatly with the axe behind the chopped pine tree, out of the way. They were able to whitewash the entire sundeck and begin on the front door before the police arrived.

II.

Mr. Pelzer offered to drop the charges if Kevin would go to work for him to pay for the chainsaw.

Anthony did not hold this against his big brother at all. He felt pangs of conscience for his brother; he felt sorry for him. He also admittedly felt sorry for himself. Kevin worked nine and ten hours a day, six days a week. When he did finally get home, he was always tired, too tired to even throw a Frisbee or baseball.

On the Thursday night of the second week in July, the two brothers lay in their beds in the dark. Anthony was wide awake. By Kevin's breathing, slow but not yet too steady or too slow, he could tell Kevin was sleepy, but not asleep.

Kevin was working for the enemy — chopping down trees, butchering them, burning them.

"Kevin," Anthony said softly, "you awake?"

"Yeah," Kevin whispered.

"It's taken a long time with just me, but the treehouse is just about fixed up now."

Kevin's bed springs creaked; Kevin was turning on his back.

"I whitewashed three coats on the whole house, even the boards up the trunk. And I took the shovel and widened the outlet from the pool—now all the leaves and junk float right on through." Kevin was quiet. Anthony didn't think he was asleep.

"And I made a rope ladder, and tied it to the sundeck so we can swim without getting our feet dirty." Kevin was still quiet.

Anthony had also cleaned up the meadow as best he could, brushing the sawdust into the grass and picking up broken sticks and limbs, and rolling the huge pine sections out of the way, but he didn't mention these things. It wasn't good to keep on talking and talking to Kevin when he wanted to sleep. So Anthony finally said, "Well, anyway the chainsaw's about paid off, right?"

Kevin's bed springs creaked; this time he was sitting up. Still he was quiet.

"Kevin?"

Kevin was quiet.

"Well," he finally said. "It was paid off last week, Antone."

III.

Kevin soon slept. Anthony stayed awake until well past midnight listening to the air conditioner turning on and off, and to Kevin breathing slow and steady, and to bed springs creaking as Kevin shifted in his sleep.

A knot in his throat was keeping him awake. He kept trying to swallow it away. Finally he slept.

The knot remained in his throat all the next day. It remained even when Kevin

arrived home from work late, carrying a fully assembled deep yellow ten-speed in the trunk of his car. You can ride this far, he told Anthony. You can ride this all over.

Anthony wanted to tell him to forget the bike, that he didn't want to ride far. Anthony wanted to tell him he wanted everything back to normal. But of course he didn't—that would have been rude and ungrateful. He had a nice bike now. He had a nice bike, but his brother didn't.

Anthony stayed awake until well past midnight listening to the air conditioner turning on and off.

"Didn't you get one?" he asked Kevin.

But Kevin didn't understand. "Don't worry," he said, slapping Anthony on the back. "I won't borrow it without clearing it with you."

Anthony did not sleep at all that night. After Kevin left for work at dawn he finally drifted off and didn't wake until three o'clock, immediately nervous because their mother never let them sleep past nine, even in summer. She was downstairs ironing shirts in the living room. She raised the iron from the board, gesturing to the kitchen with it, scattering the steam that jetted hissing from the patterned holes in the iron's flat underbelly. "Your orange juice is in the refrigerator, honey," she said.

He found the small glass of juice on the top shelf of the refrigerator and drank it in gulps. "Why didn't you wake me up?" he called from the kitchen.

"Oh, I thought I'd let you sleep, for once," she replied pleasantly, uneasily.

After finishing the orange juice

he walked past her toward the back door. She glanced up. "You're not having breakfast?" she asked.

"I'm not hungry."

"You must have breakfast. I made biscuits."

"This morning? They're old now."

"Have some breakfast, honey," she said, turning off the iron and leading him gently back to the kitchen. "You'll feel better after you have some breakfast." She laid a breakfast out, food

coming from nowhere, biscuits and sausage and scrambled eggs, and cold milk. She returned to her ironing as he ate.

"Going to ride your bicycle today?"

"Maybe later. First I got to take a couple of feet off the rope ladder. It stretched."

"I wish you wouldn't go out there again by yourself." She kept her eyes on the shirt she was ironing. "You might get hurt. Snakes or something."

He was thankful that those who are not good liars often believe anything you tell them.

Watching his mother as she methodically and carefully pressed the collar of the shirt, as she concentrated a little too hard on folding the crease just so, as she smiled bravely to herself even while her neat brow was lined with tension, he felt sadly proud

that she was not a good liar. And he was thankful that those who are not good liars often believe anything you tell them; she waved from the front porch as he pedaled away east to maybe see his brother at work.

He doubled back around the block and took the trail that led to the treehouse. The sign stood in the trail again. He didn't slow much as he rode past it, though tears were clouding his vision. New orange ribbons flitted peripherally past in the dark green mature growth of the woods. He cleaved the still summer air, passing through brief stripes of cool air and of honeysuckle fragrance like humid perfumed smoke. At the edge of the meadow he braked.

The treehouse had cracked open at the roof when it had slammed into the ground. The bright white paint looked funny down in the grass. The sundeck was broken off the main structure of the house and plowed into the dirt.

The sunburned old man stood at the edge of the pool, hands in pockets, cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth, looking expectantly from Kevin to Anthony, and back again. Kevin

set the chainsaw down at his feet and stared at it blankly. He would not look up. Anthony decided it would be easiest that way, and so pedaled away on his deep yellow brand new ten-speed bike, taking the curves in the trail carefully.



Jennifer Frierson

Interviewing the Interviewers

by Sumarie Bass

When you start looking for a job, parents always like to give advice. Parents, teachers, friends, and people in the Placement Office that you don't even know try to help at this crucial period in life. *The Circle* went further and asked the people who hire Auburn graduates what they look for when they interview.

Nancy Rush, Manager of Executive Development for Parisian, said the first thing she looks for is past work experience. "If a student has worked his or her way through school, that can compensate for a lower GPA," she points out.

Work experience is not required, but helpful, especially if it is co-op work or an internship in a related field, according to Susan Collins, Corporate Recruiter for Electronic Data Systems Corporation(EDS). EDS hires many Auburn students for their computing contracts.

Frank Davis is Chief Engineer for Texas Instruments' Electro-Optics Systems. TI conducts recruiting differently by sending engineers to interview. Davis says they are better qualified to tell engineering students what to expect in the work world. He says if students have work experience, they are usually more mature and accustomed to an engineering environment. A student with work experience has a less romantic view of the job and is more likely to stay with the company.

Davis also says that GPA is important. He says that TI looks for approximately a 3.0, which is their cut-off for students

recommended from the Placement Office, but they also accept transcripts from students with GPAs as low as a 2.8. Davis says if a student has below a 3.0 the company looks for special qualities that a prospective employee may possess to make up the difference.

Collins agrees. She says EDS prefers a 3.0 GPA for two of the programs she recruits for, and a 3.5 for the third program. Although the company looks at the total individual, Collins says, "Don't let people fool you and tell you grades aren't important, because they are."

Jim Shannon, Supervisor of Engineering for Alabama Power says, "We like people who are smart." Shannon states that a student with a 3.5 GPA who is a "people person" and has a solid work experience background is the ideal prospective employee, but Alabama Power looks at all aspects of the students they interview.

they are a bonus to students' past records.

Davis says extracurricular activities do not weigh heavily at Texas Instruments, but he definitely looks at a student's activities. "The more you have, the better you are" when interviewing, he asserts. Davis states that extracurricular activities show someone can function as a "team player" and is capable of communicating.

Communication is a watchword with many recruiters. Shannon says at Alabama Power the biggest complaint about the people in technological aspects of the company is that, while they are good engineers, they need to be able to communicate. "That's what supervision, management is all about—motivating people," he states.

Rush stresses the need for the management trainees she hires to be flexible, adaptable, and to enjoy meeting people. "If as many people loved people as said they

A student with work experience has a less romantic view of the job and is more likely to stay with the company.

Shannon also states that extracurricular activities can be a benefit to students seeking employment. "Extracurricular activities can broaden a person," especially leadership positions in those activities, he says.

Larry Wright, Employment Supervisor for the Acustar Division of Chrysler Corporation, emphasizes that extracurricular activities are not necessary, but

loved people, we'd have world peace," Rush comments. Rush recommends that students who interview give specific answers to questions. Don't say, "I was a good worker." Tell why—"because I consistently closed the store." Don't be vague; interviewers need specifics.

Communication skills have more weight in some interviews than others, according to Shan-



Kelly Benefield

non. This aspect is more important for someone interviewing for a management position than for someone interviewing for a job that has less public contact such as construction work or accounting. Extracurricular activities and writing experience are two ways to demonstrate communication skills.

Davis points out that being able to carry on a two-way conversation is important. The interview is the main way an employer can evaluate one-to-one interaction. "The ability to have interpersonal communication skills is very important," stresses Davis.

The need for employees with good communication skills could be an asset for liberal arts majors, and if a liberal arts student is interested in seeking employment outside traditional fields, there are several avenues open.

At Alabama Power, liberal arts majors can find opportunities in the media and public relations. A job in government affairs such as lobbying would be open to a student with a major in history or other humanities. Shannon notes that while there are opportunities for students with other majors, Alabama Power hires far more engineers.

According to Davis, Texas Instruments hires some liberal arts majors, but the competition is very tough, and the chances of getting a job at this engineering firm with a liberal arts degree are slim. TI hires 500-1500 engineers per year, 10-20 people in business, and fewer in other fields each year.

A management position at Parisian, on the other hand, is open to a graduate with any major. Rush points out that the main quality the company looks for is an ability to work well with people.

According to Collins, at Electronic Data Systems their systems engineering program is open to any major as long as the student has technical aptitude. Collins says this aptitude is usually shown through course work.

The resume is another part of the interview process that concerns many students. Collins asserts that a resume is an important first impression, especially when sent through the mail. She prefers to see a neat and accurate one-page resume on good paper. "Grammar and spelling are very important," she adds.

"Some students, very few, come to the interview prepared."

Recruiters who come through the Placement Office rely heavily on the form resume given by that office. The information is readily available; the form is concise, and interviewers know where to find what they need.

Davis says as far as resumes go, the content is what is important, "not how well you fill out that form." He emphasizes, "If you don't have good grades, you don't have any work experience, and you weren't involved, it doesn't matter how you write it down."

One of the most important aspects of the interview is to be prepared. "Some students, very few, come to the interview prepared," declares Davis. "It makes a much stronger impression if they know a little about your company, about your product," he says. He estimates only one in fifteen has a working knowledge of the company. Information on Texas Instruments, as well as many other companies, is easily accessible in the Placement Office on campus. TI has a

videotape in the Placement Office that is very beneficial to prospective employees, according to Davis.

Collins tells of an interview one of her colleagues conducted in which the student thought EDS stood for "Electronic Dating Service." She says that it is important for a student to do his homework on the company—read, call, and be prepared to ask questions. Collins recommends that students utilize the Placement Office to research companies, get help writing resumes, and for practice interviews.

Wright says if a student asks something about Chrysler that is readily available information, it is insulting, like the interviewer asking something that has already been answered on a resume. On the other hand, it is flattering to know the student has researched and knows something about the company.

"An interviewer can tell a lot about people by the questions they ask."

"Have some questions prepared; write them down," recommends Rush. She also says students should make a point to ask

good questions. "An interviewer can tell a lot about people by the questions they ask," she points out.

In conclusion, here are some general tips that Collins gives for interviewing:

1) Bring a notebook and take notes. This shows a real interest in the company.

2) Bring a calendar. If the interviewer wants to set up another appointment, be prepared to find an available date.

3) Be enthusiastic. Collins says her first question is always, "Tell me about yourself." This is a student's chance to sell themselves and an interviewer's opportunity to see how well the students can express themselves.

4) Find out what the next step of the process is. Ask, "Can I call you next week?" Follow up on the interview.

Most importantly, the interview is to determine if there is a match of interests. Collins says at EDS they like to say that an interview is an "exchange of ideas

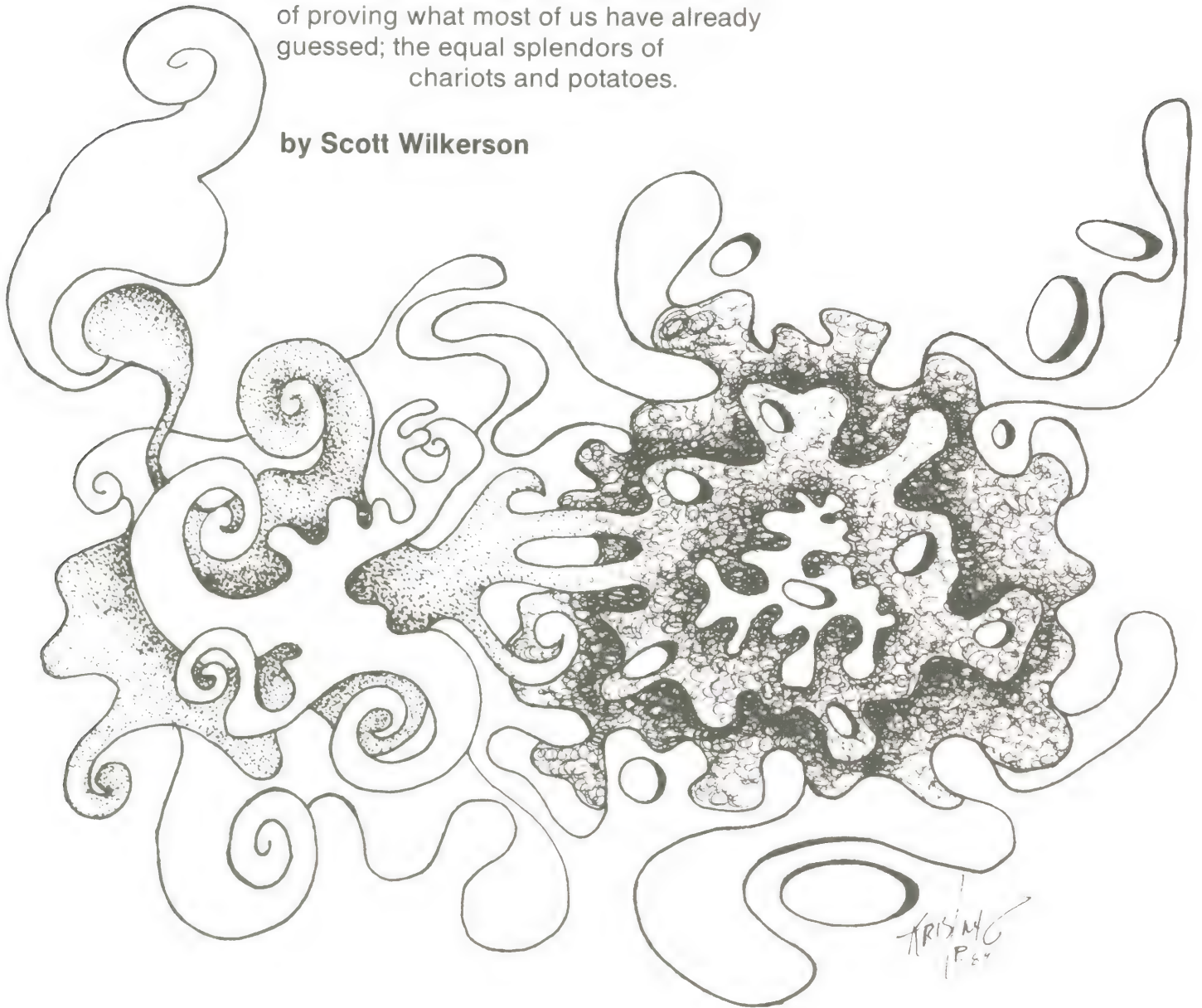
and information." An interview is a time to find out if you're right for the company, and if the company is right for you.

Method

Everywhere there is question.
Yes?

Everytime, there is wanting to know,
as insoluble as simple wanting.
Everybody has a sense of a chord not
resolved, but what we need is a method
of proving what most of us have already
guessed; the equal splendors of
chariots and potatoes.

by **Scott Wilkerson**



AIDS in Lee County: It's Closer Than You Think

by Leslie Harris

Five cases of AIDS have been reported in Lee County, according to statistics as of March 15, said Richard Holmes, director of the AIDS Surveillance Branch of the State Department of Public Health. Three of those are white males, two are black males. One patient has died.

These numbers are shown in relation to the number of confirmed cases so far in Alabama totaling 472 as of March 15. AIDS in Lee county is increasing "to some degree" because of Auburn University, said Betty McCreery, clinical coordinator for the Lee County Health Department, "because it's moving into that population."

One potential reason for AIDS spreading faster in Lee County is "we're only two hours from Atlanta, Ga., which has the 10th highest number of cases, plus we are a very mobile society here at a university, and many students go many places including Atlanta on the weekends, and they experiment with drugs and sex which are the two ways AIDS is transmitted," said Pat Ellis, director of nursing at Drake Student Health Center.

In November, 1987, the *Birmingham News* ran a story about an Auburn student who tested positive for the AIDS virus. The News said he claimed he "had sexual relations with more than 30 men on campus" prior to the testing. He said he never imagined AIDS at Auburn, but said that

is where he got it.

Some Auburn students feel there is a need for concern for AIDS on campus, but not necessarily a personal one.

One Auburn senior said, "I know my own personal habits are such that I wouldn't get it. The only thing I'm afraid of is for my friends that don't have the proper respect for the disease. They (the Surgeon General, health officials, etc.) have started such a panic about AIDS; they need to be keeping people abreast of new research development."

Another student said she was aware, but doesn't know how common it is around campus. "I don't know anybody personally that has AIDS." She said she wasn't worried about getting AIDS. "I don't do drugs, and I don't sleep around. I don't really think I will ever get it. I'd like to be more informed though. I'm practically AIDS illiterate."

Accurate statistics on AIDS are hard to obtain in Lee County.

"The policy of the county health department is that we are not permitted to quote figures," McCreery said.

"In the beginning, in small communities, if a number was reported and someone became ill, people started pointing fingers toward them as having AIDS," McCreery remarked. "The state immediately decided to stop giving out numbers to avoid people pointing fingers. It is now the policy of the state not to give out numbers."

Another reason people hesitate to quote numbers is the statistics

are not up to date, according to Ellis. There are blind statistics studies from marriage blood tests to try to "get a feel for how many HIV positives there might be."

"My latest printout, dated Jan. 27, says we have had five cases in Lee County," she said. "This is only reporting AIDS confirmed cases. Be sure you know the difference between AIDS and positive HIV."

A person testing HIV positive is a carrier of the AIDS virus. The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome develops from the virus, and that is when a person is susceptible to sickness such as pneumonia or other infections. When someone contracts the AIDS virus it can take up to eight years before he actually gets AIDS, Ellis said. Then most of those die within an average of two years.

A person who tests HIV positive will not necessarily get AIDS, but it's "a pretty high probability at this point in time with what we know," Ellis asserts.

"I think statistics now are saying something like 99 percent based on how it's happening today. But with such a long incubation period, and with the tremendous studies that are being made, no, (someone) could not say that they (HIV positives) will die any sooner than anybody else will."

Once a person gets to the point of AIDS, he is "very susceptible to illness and disease," Ellis said.

"Our concern is not to get overly concerned with the

number of cases of AIDS in Lee County; it's the number of HIV positives that is of significance, and we don't at this time have that data," she stated. "Those are the ones who are at risk of spreading the disease. Not the guy or lady or child who's dying on the hospital bed."

Another problem with gathering statistics of AIDS deaths is what is listed as the cause of death, Ellis said. Many times the cause is listed as pneumonia or something else, "which is actually what kills them."

The Opelika-Auburn News, like many newspapers, has not reported any cause of deaths in the obituaries as being AIDS.

"I'm pretty certain we would not report AIDS in the obituaries," said Penny Poole, a staff writer for the paper. "I think if it's a well known person it might be reported in a news story."

The Auburn University Student Health Center, the Lee County Health Department and the East Alabama Medical Center (EAMC) are some of the local places to be tested for AIDS. The health department offers pre-test counseling and post-test counseling along with testing. According to McCreery, Health Department Coordinator, "Anyone can come in and request a test."

When people come in to the health department and request an AIDS test, they are first counseled on the consequences of knowing the results, positive or negative, said Marcy Gilder, a nurse practitioner at the health department. They are given a questionnaire that asks: What if the results come back positive? What if it changes your friends or family? What if your insurance is canceled? etc.

Before any tests are done the people have to "sign that they are

willing to do this process," McCreery said.

When the results come back in the mail, they can only be opened by McCreery or Gilder, according to Gilder. The tests are strictly confidential. They are not kept in a person's regular medical file; they are kept in a separate locked file.

the STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) division in Montgomery," McCreery said.

"There are some people who don't want to know the results," Gilder said. "If they don't want to know, we don't tell them." If they do want to know, they have to come in and sign to pick up the results, she said.

In November, 1987, the Birmingham News ran a story about an Auburn student who tested positive for the AIDS virus.

"We have been instructed that we are not to do counseling with people whose tests come back positive. That will be handled by

Some people come in just to have the test done. "Others come in for different things, and we offer the test to them. Anyone



Lori West

15 and older who tests positive for tuberculosis at the health department is asked to have the AIDS test done," McCreery said. Tuberculosis is one of the infections AIDS patients easily contract.

Ellis said the student health center, which began testing in December, 1986, has so far only had three tests come back HIV positive. "That is because those who are positive are going elsewhere to be tested."

This is not an accurate count of all the students who have tested HIV positive, only of the ones who were tested at the health center, Ellis contends. In some states such as Georgia, the testing is anonymous, according to Ellis. In Alabama a person has to identify himself, but all records are confidential. Any positive test results are reported to the state health department.

At the health center it is documented in the student's file that the test has been ordered. But the results are kept locked up in a separate file, Ellis said. Patients at EAMC are tested as a result of doctors' orders or at their own request. "People can't just walk in off the street and be tested," said Lucy Pennington, director of Public Relations at EAMC.

The hospital also does pre-test and post-test counseling any time a test is ordered for a patient.

"(HIV positives) are the ones who are at risk of spreading the disease. Not the guy or lady or child who's dying on the hospital bed."

Ellis, McCreery and Gilder agree that if all health care persons take necessary precautions for themselves in treating patients and treat every patient



Lori West

as a potential AIDS virus carrier, there is no reason for them to know who is HIV positive or who has AIDS. Anyone working with the public should take "universal precautions," Ellis said, such as wearing gloves.

Any of the doctors in Lee County can treat AIDS patients.

"There's not a lot of treatment for the AIDS virus as such," Graves said. "We treat whatever the infections are that crop up. And also we do use the only drug that is effective against the virus, and that is AZT (Azidothymidine)."

Graves, who has been in Lee County since July, 1988, said he has seen about six people with AIDS. In lower incidence states, such as Alabama, many of the AIDS cases are people who get sick and come home to die. "At least some of those come here because they have family or friends that take care of them," Graves said. Some of the cases in Alabama fall into this category. This makes reporting accurate numbers difficult because some

There is no special training or practice for doctors to treat AIDS, said Dr. Allen Graves, an infectious disease specialist in Lee County.

may not get reported at all, he said.

"Basically there's not much difference between treating AIDS patients and, say, any patient with any serious disease. It's just that you manage the problems that crop up. I guess that's really all we're doing here. That's really all anybody in the United States is able to do right now," he said.

Graves explains that he counsels people with the AIDS virus as well as those with AIDS. He explains to the patient "what the infection means and what they have to look forward to." There are precautions that can be taken including abstinence from sex or using a condom and avoiding sharing needles.

Lee County AIDS Outreach was organized in November, 1988, to provide direct services to people with AIDS, to their family and friends, and to educate the local community about AIDS and its victims. The outreach program originally started with people from the county health department, the state health department, social workers and other concerned citizens "to make people aware that AIDS is not out there somewhere; it's right here," said Dawn Glascock, president of Aids Outreach.

Emily Myers, in charge of the direct services of AIDS Outreach, explains that one of the goals of the outreach program is "to develop practical support teams for anyone whose life has been challenged by AIDS." That can refer to having AIDS, knowing someone with AIDS or working with people with AIDS.

The statistics are constantly changing. Everyone needs to be educated about AIDS. "AIDS is something very new, and we all have to learn to deal with it," McCreery said.

A Patient Speaks Out

"It's a terrible nightmare," said a 40-year-old AIDS patient living in Lee County who wishes to remain anonymous.

This AIDS patient said he is gay. "That wasn't always an easy question to answer, but there's no hiding it now."

He was tested prior to getting AIDS and found out he was HIV positive.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. "I'd always tried to be somewhat safe. I just couldn't believe it basically." He said he feels like he knows how he got AIDS.

A counselor told him about meetings and support groups. "My pride was so I said 'I don't need any of this; basically I don't believe it. My body's pretty healthy, and I'll get over it,'" he said. "Lo and behold I didn't."

In November, he began having headaches he couldn't get rid of. "Then it was time to go to the hospital," he said.

He had some operations, and while he was in the hospital, his mother and the rest of his family found out he was gay. "I felt a lot of guilt, and I wasn't too happy about it, but there hasn't been any problem, and they love me now more than ever," he said. "If it wasn't for the support of my friends and family, this whole thing would have been a lot worse."

Most of his friends are gay. "They accept me with a great amount of love and support. I couldn't ask for anything more," he said.

"Right now I know of a few (people) that are positive, and I have known a good number that have died from AIDS. That was kind of a slow, suffering way to go which is real sad, just real sad."

This disease is something that is with him all the time. "It goes from high to low. I could very easily stay in bed and cry about it because I'm missing a lot of things now that I could be enjoying. I try every day to tell myself this is a new life now. I've got hopefully another 40 years to go," he said.

A close friend described him as "unusually optimistic, even with the sickness and pain he goes through every day."

As an AIDS patient, he said he doesn't think the public, as well as the gay community, is that informed or concerned. "People are still doing things they did prior to all of this— still unsafe sex. I think the public still puts it off into a corner like it's just a gay disease, or don't mention it and it'll go away. Still a lot of people have a bad impression that people with it are just terribly sick, lousy people. I think it's a wrong impression," he said.

Offering advice, he said, "Go for just a one person relationship. Or take all the precautions you can."

"I thought I was a pretty healthy person, and it got the better of me."

"Don't think it can't infect you, because it can. I'm living proof that it's a very life-threatening disease. When you're sexually involved in a situation, it's hard to remember that. But just remember whether you want to live or die the next time you get in a situation you think will last just a few minutes. You've got to think twice. It's not fun. I'm one of the lucky ones. I'm alive."

"If ever I could show what it's done to me I sure would like to get that word out," he said.



Lori West

Between Streams and Primal Soup

I

There is order in this chaos...
Swirling, tumbling, babbling about,
Then nonchalantly rising to lap
Your shoes with a billion lives,
That have no meaning to you now
In hemispheres obscured by thought—
Standing where the strangers stand;
And weren't you once inside?

II

And every molecule that flows
Past you is a human life
That lived to be a certain age—
Imperceptible
In the mist of liquid time;
Illusive still, to things with eyes
About and still about to find.

You nurse a foolish pride

That led you to these distant shores,
So stand along the lonely fringe
And watch the crystal chaos lap
Your shoes with a billion lives.

by Scott Johnson

From the Collected Thank You Notes of Gunther Marmon

by Scott Wilkerson

Dear Aleck,

Thank you for the anniversary gift. Merydith and I have long debated whether to acquire, for display, an enlarged photograph of a single, lucky spermatzoan about to penetrate the ova. That you and Cora have made the decision for us seems, somehow, to validate our hesitation. Well.

Cohabiting these two years has been as much a test of whether we desire ourselves as each other. And I have emerged liking myself about as well as before, which is still considerably less than many of my associations who have had and, indeed, have better reasons to be dissatisfied with themselves, but, who never were and, in fact, are not.

Because I am dissatisfied with myself, others strike me as less potent, less promising, having settled down with vindication while I trudge on doggedly after absolution — something I fully expect to find in either Merydith herself or in the banana pudding she presently declares will be served when we entertain six days hence. This, incidentally, is your invitation.

Gunther

Dear Henderson,

Thanks for that most fascinating letter regarding your success in garden-therapy. I suppose we

are forever pondering ways to restructure our lives, and living, as we do, in an increasingly technocratic culture, I think it is metaphorically appropriate that so many are turning, finally, to psycho-florology as a means of weeding out their neuroses. Unfortunately, I have had only dim successes with the program. I once took an interest in our house fern, watered her lovingly for over three months and was proud to have been so conspicuously competent a keeper until I discovered she was artificial. And while you will find no ferns in my home these days, I have remembered we must not caress every crisis lest our therapies supplant us.

Gunther

P.S. In five days, Merydith and I host a gathering; early evening to late, come!

Dear Kervis,

Thank you for letting me borrow your word processing program. My own diskettes are irretrievably distributed to relatives and other preoccupations. Computers really are wonderful, taken in their right sense. An associate of mine, Shelby Twilister, has found a delightful application for his PC modem: Whenever he and his wife want a weekend alone, he simply reduces his two children, Warren and Rita, to binary and uploads them to his mother's modem one hundred fifty miles away. He always says, "Those kids sure get

a kick out of being reintegrated upstate!"

Social experiment at our place this weekend.

Gunther

Dear Phyllis,

Thank you for sharing your dream with us at lunch last week. The mail man in the latter part of the dream was certainly approaching self-parody when he suggested that the meaning of life would be a significant revelation. To the extent we are all more or less interested in the meaning of life, self-parody in its ponderance is not a wholly untenable scheme, knowing consequentially, as we do, so much about parody and so little about life. But I, personally, gave up that larger quest long ago and am now concentrating on the meaning of my dinette suite. I suspect the most any of us could get in exchange for the meaning of life would be an honorary membership in the Cousteau Society and maybe a month's free parking. Yes, well. Social gathering this Friday with us. Call.

Gunther

Dear Merydith,

Thank you for these two years. Quite an unexpected triumph, really. Because you know the prospect of your happiness is the substance of my own, you will

only feign horror when I say love is a technical innovation designed to keep sex from involuting and becoming about itself. You keep me interested in things; left alone, I would certainly dissolve in my quirky notions of my notions of this or that. Your excellent practical influence has never been so evident as just yesterday when I stepped into the shower. Before I closed the curtain, I saw myself fade into the fogging mirror and I thought, "What we have here is not a metaphor, only water vapor."

Gunther

Dear Author,

On behalf of this entire fictive project, I thank you for everything. Nothing is so elegant or clumsy as a letter. No other written format affords the urgency of a message in the post. And while there are, indeed, faster methods of communication, they leave our metaphysical needs wholly unaddressed. That marvelous revelation of a letter in the box is excused perhaps only, and just barely, by the equally sinister sensation of drafting and mailing off your

clever response. Life can be ponderously lonely if we fail to consummate even our most cursory connections.

Now, we do not wish to seem ungrateful or bitter, but the circumstances on this side of the page have begun to change. The consensus of our thinking, presently, is that we can manage quite without you. We are, of course, not rejecting you, only your ubiquity. In exchange for autonomy, we have collectively resolved to pursue our several narratives with only those passions, pretensions, and possessions you gave us.

Insofar as none of us would exist without you and your competent pen, we are eternally in your debt. Or so desire to be. But in order to conceive eternity, we have to risk mortality. Merydith and I have often walked under the stars you gave us and have often been dazzled. And neither of us has ever bothered with what everybody knows about stars, which is, of course, that the light we observe was cast unimaginably long ago and has traveled an inscrutable distance to reach us. Instead, we have leaned back and considered that immense cosmic heritage, pleased to see that ancient light looked quite new.

You are cordially invited to our celebration this weekend. Let us convocate to the last. We leap, apparently without motivation, beyond conceptuality and into a more lyric realm, yours. Good-bye, goodbye, goodbye.

Gunther

P.S. Hello, hello, hello.



Ginger Freeman

Montgomery's Newest Cultural Attraction

by Becky Haack

Stepping through the tall doors, I was immediately filled with a sense of awe at the beauty of the building. I hesitated for a moment before I approached the table which held the guest book. I vaguely remember signing my name and gathering materials to increase my knowledge of this building I had just entered. This is the Wynton Blount Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery's newest cultural attraction. After eighteen months of construction, the museum opened last September. Appropriately it is housed in a corner of the Blount Cultural Park, a home it shares with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. The museum itself is 45,000 square feet, including 20,000 square feet of exhibition. Scarcely knowing where to begin, I took the path to my left.

After 18 months of construction, the museum opened last September.

The first feeling I experienced was that of quiet spaciousness. The style chosen by the architect firm of Borganier/McKee/Sims is neoclassical/neopaladium, a style distinguished by its clean lines. The elevated ceilings seem to rise forever, giving sufficient light to every room via the many windows in the dome. Adding to the natural light are studio lamps

which are supported on top of the partition walls. The light is reflected by the white walls and the highly polished Mexican marble floor. The main hall is round, containing the Information Desk and a variety of avenues for visitors to choose. The collection, which includes donations over the past years from the public, also contains 41 works from Blount Incorporated's private collection.

Even the watchful eyes of the guards ceased to unnerve me.

The artwork is exhibited in a maze of partitioned walls which form rooms, arranging the paintings with some degree of coherence as to subject matter. These rooms also contain crafted artwork in the form of bronze sculptures, jewelry, decorated

plates, and silverware. The jewelry represented ranges from a first-century Roman necklace to a medallion of St. Michael. A variety of crystal jewelry and other items are also on display with vases and primitive artwork in a glass wall case.

A quiet, peaceful mood descended on me as I approached a partition wall containing various

oil paintings of Jesus, including Renesse's "Christ and Pilot." One particularly striking painting was the "Madonna and Child" by Carlo Dolci. As I moved through this first section of altar paintings and other religious work, I became oblivious to everything else. Even the watchful eyes of the guards ceased to unnerve me. I soon came upon Monet's "Field of Poppies"—a work that never fails to capture one's imagination.

Moving through this gallery, time seemed to stand still. I encountered works by John Singleton Copley (the oldest in the Blount collection is dated 1770), John Singer Sargent, and Edward Hopper.

Perhaps the painting that held my attention the longest was "Dusk Wings" by Thomas Moran. I remained seated in front of this 1860 oil on canvas for an immeasurable amount of time, lost in its tranquility. For those more historically minded, the time-worn portrait of George Washington by Hicks is a must-see. Also present are portraits of husbands, wives, and children that illustrate the evolution of painting techniques.

The second floor houses the Fitzpatrick collection. This collection is a compilation of works done in a variety of mediums such as oil on board, oil on masonite, and watercolor on paper. A

special room to the side of this collection is reserved for fragile art, as it has reduced lighting. The collection on display was that of Rembrandt's etchings, mostly drypoint on burin paper. Dominating one corner of this room is a bust of Jeanne D'Aire by Rodin, dated 1890.

display their work. For adults the museum offers films, lectures, and workshops, as well as guided tours. Memberships to the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) are also available to the public. The benefits include invitations to special events and discounts on gift items and

itself, which is made from Alabama brick and limestone. As I headed for the nearest door I passed by the gift shop. Inside could be found a multitude of items from posters to jewelry to books on art. I also walked through the cafe which looks out toward the man-made lake and the terrace with its amphitheater and bronze statues. The serenity of the grounds provides the perfect area to reflect on the artwork inside. Together the museum and the grounds surrounding it offer a wonderful escape from daily life, making the trip to Montgomery well worth the effort.

I soon came upon Monet's "Field of Poppies" — a work that never fails to capture one's imagination.

Besides magnificent art and sculpture, the museum also offers programs for young and old alike. For children there is Art Works, a first-hand opportunity for children to experience the creation of art. This area also includes a gallery where children may

magazines. Young people are encouraged to join the Montgomery Masters, a support group that takes part in art related functions.


Before I was ready to leave, I decided to stroll about the grounds and look at the building





Brother Wolf

Frozen tundra
stand amidst the crashing waves,
brother wolf behind you.
Totemsneeringwoodengods
careening in perfect stillness
on Pacific winter night
singing around
a roaring fire,
"good hunting, return with much game..."
sadly turning
Eskimo wearyface lightly
grimaces smiles in his heart.
Brother wolf behind you.
Sneakin spear comfortably at hand
eyes straying from side
to side.
Brother rabbit breathless still
i wish you no harmbutmychildren
cry for you in the night...
Fir and snowdrift
easing together in silent discomfort
along sterile winter path
standing together like step-father and child...
Game bag full
return again through night's bosom



among strangling fear and his allies.
Brother wolf behind you.
Path vanishing like a ghost.
No tracks newfallensnow...
no broken twig no displaced snow
ohgod oh gods oh anybody
this can't (wearymongolface
contorted like egg on a hot sidewalk)
be happening..
snow falls harder now,
brother wolf behind you.
Running falling blindly screaming
brother wolf behi...
oh God.
game bag in trail
eyes streamingfrozenbroken currents
brother wolf.
God.
Frozen tundra.
falling through crashing waves.
Totemsneeringwinter-Pacific night,
Kakuitl dreams
and weary face brotherwolf sleeps.
long and dreamless sleep
in the house of distant awakening...

by Dean Addison



Musicians, Monuments, and A Horse With No Name

by Sumarie Bass

The buses were scheduled to pull out at 7:30 Wednesday morning. In band, we have an acronym for what happens to you if you miss the buses—YOYO, "You're On Your Own." I didn't think my 1975 Maverick would make it to Washington, D.C. in time for me to march with the Auburn University Band in the inaugural parade that Friday if I had to drive.

It didn't really matter about the 7:30 departure time, anyway. As clarinet section leader, I had to be there at 7:00 to check roll, and Beth and Kay, my next door neighbors, Shale, who lived around the corner, and I agreed to leave the house at 6:30 to make sure we all got seats on the bus. Bus Five.

The band usually takes eight buses on away trips, and each bus has its own crowd with its own distinctive personality. You don't get on Bus Two, the drum bus, without an invitation, and often my bus, Bus Five, was Standing Room Only.

Wednesday

Kay and Shale went ahead to the band hall in the morning darkness while Beth and I decided with all our stuff, after we picked up Scottie, we'd never fit everything in my car. Lucky us.

Scottie was waiting outside her apartment in the 30 degree weather, so we quickly piled her

stuff on ours and drove off. No sooner had I pulled out of the parking lot than my car started pulling badly to the left, then I heard the unmistakable thud, thud, thud of a flat tire, so I pulled over into Taco Bell.

We walked to Hardee's to use the phone, and Beth stopped to ask a policeman sitting in the drive-thru for help. "We had a flat tire, and we have to catch the bus to Washington with the band. Can you give us a ride to the band hall?"

Seeing our distress, the officer quickly responded, "Well, the dispatcher's food might get cold."

"The bus leaves in ten minutes. It would be nice if you're on it."

Alternately freezing and fuming, I placed a frantic call to the band hall. The drum major answered the phone. "Chris? This is Sumarie. I had a flat tire in Taco Bell. Send somebody to get us!" We discovered that Shale's car could hold five people and all our luggage after all. Barely.

We arrived at the band hall, picked up our \$10-a-day per diem checks, took roll or signed in, and then formed a mass of people hoping to be the first on the bus, or to get on the bus at all.

Bus Five turned out to be a 43 instead of a 47 seat bus (band members know a lot about Grey-

hound buses) and Lee, my seat mate, and I didn't get to sit in front of Beth and Jim, his roommate, like we usually did. At least we had something to complain about for the first two hours of the sixteen we would spend on the bus en route to Washington that day, Wednesday, January 18.

College students can entertain themselves in any situation. On the bus, we got to know each other really well. ("So, Rita," asked Lee of the redhead stretched across our laps, "how far would you go on a first date?" "How about the seventh?") We sang songs like "A Horse With No Name." (La La La, La, La La

La La, La La La, La, La.) I passed out the fudge and teacakes my grandmother had made especially for the trip, and we had our usual "Top Ten List," compiled by Andrew (David Letterman) Keys.

Top Ten Things to do in Washington, D.C.

(I'll list the top four.)

4) Show your patriotism by signing the Declaration of Independence.

3) Steal the Hope Diamond—curse your friends.

2) Ask directions to the Statue of Liberty.

and (drum roll, please)

1) Explain to Yankees why we don't have banjos on our knees.

Then Chris Winchester, our 6'7" drum major linked elbows with me, bent over, and careened down the bus aisle with me on his back while he screamed, "Sumarie-cam! Sumarie-cam!"

Bus Five riders have a problem with getting the slowest buses of the pack. L.A., our bus driver, was about as pleased with the situation as we were. We looked out the window outside Atlanta and saw no other buses in sight.

The problem became so bad that before we stopped to eat lunch in Gastonia, North Carolina, the Alabama State Trooper who was escorting us dropped back to find us. We crept along, then those of us in the front of the bus watched in amazement as the trooper pulled off the interstate to fall in behind the other seven buses while we zoomed, or rather, inched by the turn-off. L.A. claimed he didn't know it was our trooper, but we were too hungry to be very forgiving.

After turning around five miles down the road, we pulled into the mall for lunch at 2:30. Scottie, Lee, and I decided to eat at Shoney's. We regretted our decision 30 minutes later when, still unserved, Dr. Vinson our band director came to our table and said, "The bus leaves in ten minutes. It would be nice if you're on it." We got our food in to-go boxes and ate on the bus. After seven hours, it was our second home.

Ten minutes later, we stopped to change bus drivers. We picked up John Farmer (alias Farmer John) and let L.A. ride with us. L.A. got back into our good graces after the turn-off incident by stealing a microphone off another bus for us to use for announcements.

As we prepared to leave the bus station, Farmer John underesti-

mated the length of the bus, and everyone on the bus spent several minutes filling out an accident form.

"Did the driver apply brakes?" No.

"Did the driver blow the horn?" No.

"Describe what happened." We backed into a pole.

In North Carolina, I asked, "How much longer, Chris?"

He replied, "Ten more minutes."

We all had to mark X's on a bus diagram to show where we were when the accident occurred. The people at the insurance company may have been somewhat confused since Rita, Lee, and I all marked our X's in the same seat, and Andrew marked his X standing in the aisle. So we finally started back on the trip.

In North Carolina, I asked, "How much longer, Chris?"

He replied, "Ten more minutes."

Most of the bus was awakened by Andrew screaming, "Look, it's the Washington Monument!"

"No, stupid," Beth replied, "that's the windshield wiper."

In Virginia, I asked Chris, "How much longer?"

He called back reassuringly, "Ten more minutes."

Finally, after finishing off most of the fudge and cookies, we stopped for supper at 10:30 in Richmond, Virginia. Seven of us piled off the bus and headed for the nearest McDonald's along with close to 100 other band members. After waiting in line for over an hour, there and in Hardee's after we gave up on McDonald's, finally 15 minutes before

we were scheduled to leave, we got our food.

Back on the bus, it was around midnight, and everyone had drifted off to sleep. Rita came to talk to Lee and me, so I let her sit down and stretched myself across their laps. We soon fell asleep, but I woke up a few minutes later in great pain when

Lee moved his knees and crushed me between him and the seat in front of us. We got up and watched the Washington skyline come into view. We never woke Rita, and she told us how comfortable she had been, and how well she had slept while Lee and I listened, so tired we would have fallen asleep except for the excruciating pain in our necks and backs.

At 2:30 a.m. Thursday, January 19, we pulled into the parking lot of the Holiday Inn in Alexandria, Virginia. After dragging our stuff off the bus and fighting 300 people for the elevator (or dragging suitcases up six flights of stairs), Kay, Beth, Shale, and I fell asleep with hardly a word.

Thursday

After four refreshing hours of sleep, we were on the bus at 8:00 headed for a small high school to practice the parade. The only exciting moment of practice was when Beth got called out of warm-up to help carry the Auburn University banner in front of the band.

Back on the bus, the word for the day was announced. "Obelisk." You know what to do when you hear the word of the day—scream real loud! I wasn't sure what obelisk meant for a while, but I heard a lot of interesting uses for the word.

We drove to the capitol to have our picture made on the steps. We changed into our uniforms on the bus.

Several minutes were spent lining up on the steps, making sure to leave a path down the middle for the senators and congressmen to get through. "We don't want to disrupt the government," Dr. Vinson reminded us.

After having a few pictures taken, the state troopers zoomed up and handed Dr. Vinson the suit he had left at the hotel. He ran up the steps, ducked behind the tubas, and reappeared in a few minutes with a coat, tie, and a different pair of pants on.

Picture taking over, Dr. Vinson stood on the ladder to announce plans for the rest of the day. It was already near 2:00, and I hadn't eaten since a few teacakes and a coke at 7:30 that morning. Dr. Vinson finished talking, looked around mischievously, and held up three fingers, our signal to play "War Eagle." Dr. Vinson said, "Once through, hup, two, ready, go!" We played "War Eagle" on the steps of the United States Capitol building as security guards ran in from all directions, and surely congressmen and senators wondered at the Auburn pep rally outside.

We got back on the buses and changed out of our uniforms back into "civilian" clothes. The buses headed for the hotel, but somehow Bus Five got lost in traffic. We lost sight of the other buses. Lee and I noticed we were going even slower than usual on the interstate, and L.A. seemed to be

looking from side to side. Just as we began to get really worried, L.A. asked nobody in particular, "Does any of this look familiar to you?"

Luckily, Lee had been entertaining the surrounding seats with stupid comments about the buildings and scenery on the way to the capitol. We retraced our steps, and after asking the bus, "Okay, raise your hand if you think we should go south," we arrived back at the hotel and had ten minutes before the buses were to leave for the mall for lunch.

We finally got to sit down and eat a meal at 2:30, after a day and a half of eating a meal for under \$4.00 and under 15 minutes, then it was back on the buses for a bus tour of the monuments.

Our first stop was the Vietnam Memorial. Everyone was laughing, talking, and taking pictures when we got off the bus, but when we reached the monument, an incredible silence overcame our group of 300 plus college students. I walked by myself in contemplation, and when I stopped for a minute, I heard Ted, one of the bus drivers talking. He was remembering the day he found out his brother had been killed in Vietnam.

We piled off the bus for a huge game of caterpillar on the Jefferson Memorial lawn.

Lost in thought, I walked up to meet Rita and Scottie at the end of the wall. We stood quietly until Lee walked up, stood for a minute, then said, "Come on. I want to show you something." He glanced at his watch, then pulled me by the arm up toward the Lincoln Memorial. As we ran we noticed the Washington Monument was tinted totally pink by the sun. Breathlessly, Lee

explained that our goal was to get to the Lincoln Memorial to take a picture of the facing monument in the reflection pool, but by the time we bounded up all the steps, the pink had crept up the monument until it was only tinted at the top. We turned and hurried back to the buses for the continuation of our bus tour.

The next stop was the Jefferson Memorial. It was a long stop. After visiting the monument, we got back on the buses and headed out. Except for Bus Four. We sat on the bus for over an hour while the bus drivers went to stare at Bus Four's engine. We had strict instructions not to get off the bus.

Finally, becoming claustrophobic, a group of us gathered at the door of the bus. Bored, I jumped off the bus and said, "Chris, let me ride on your shoulders." We entertained the buses for a few minutes as I knocked on the bus windows and pretended that I was nine feet tall, since people on the bus could only see me from the waist up.

A group of people from Bus Six tried to escape and ride the subway back to the hotel, but they were stopped by a graduate assistant before they reached the street.

At last, somebody in authority decided to leave the dead bus, and the word came back for everyone to get anything on Bus Four off. We saw our chance, and piled off the bus for a huge game of caterpillar on the Jefferson Memorial lawn. We laid down side by side face down on the ground, and the person on the end rolled over everybody else until the whole pile of people had

replaced itself further down the lawn.

Right as we finished, everyone who had gone to retrieve instruments or luggage came back on the bus announcing, "I fixed the bus." So the buses started again for the Lincoln Memorial.

Hungry and exhausted, we breezed through the Lincoln Memorial and arrived back at the mall to eat supper at 9:00. At the hotel, eventually the usual crowd found its way to our room to watch David Letterman and watch me try to keep a journal.

Friday

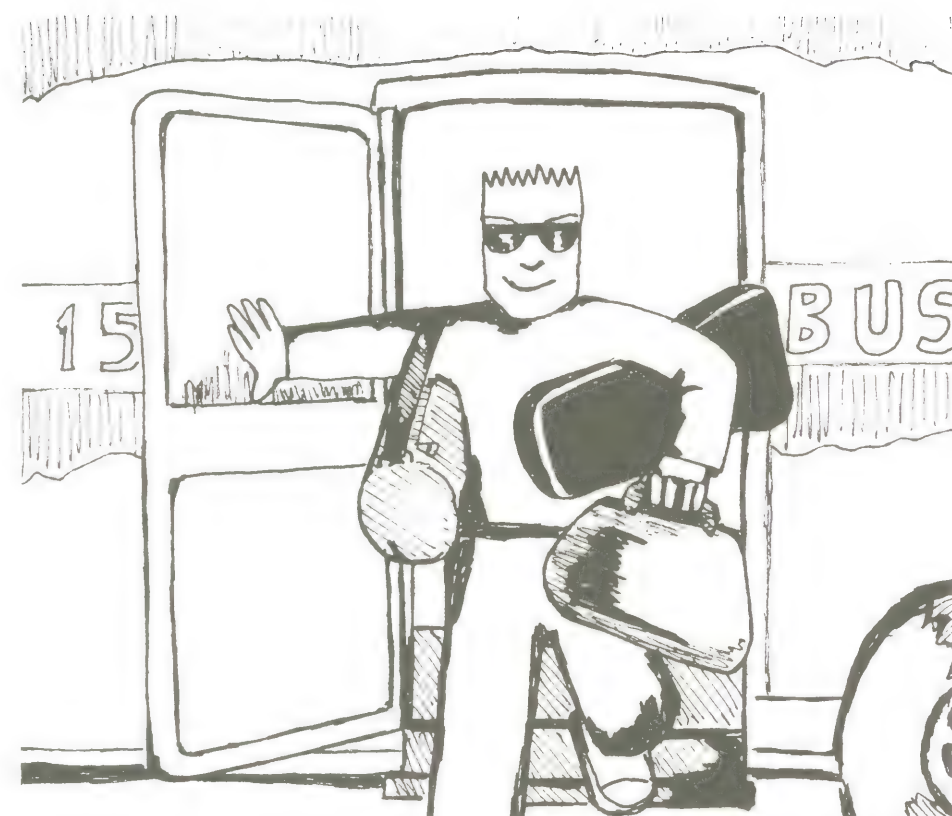
The next morning, Friday, January 20, at 9:00 we were on the bus and headed for the Pentagon. The word for the day was "intestine."

The Pentagon parking lot was filled with buses. Hundreds of them. Everywhere. After taking it all in, Kay turned to me, her dark brown eyes wide, and said, "This really is a big deal, isn't it?"

Petty Officer Young came on the bus to brief us on parade procedure. He was stunned when we told him we changed into our uniforms on the bus. All together. We're very close.

We piled off the bus and walked to the nearest stand to get our free donuts and hot chocolate. We pushed our way through masses of uniformed band members until we came to a standstill, then Lee turned to the crowd and recited his favorite line from "The Naked Gun," "Please disperse, nothing to see here." Purdue's "All American Band" didn't think we were very funny.

Soon after, we realized that everyone except us had tickets to get food. We walked back to the buses to get tickets, then walked back to the stands to fight the



Tim Frye

crowd. We wandered around the backs of the concession stands trying to find a short line until we saw a table with boxes of donuts on it. Lee asked the man in the stand for a box. The man said, "Sure," and our problems were temporarily solved.

That was the assembly area. Next we drove to the staging area on the mall in front of the capitol. After sitting around on the bus, then standing around in parade formation, I had just enough time to eat half a hotdog and drink four swallows of coke for lunch.

Next, we lined up for the parade. We were lucky; it was warm. The temperature was in the 40's, and it wouldn't have been unbearably cold except for the freezing wind that blew dust in our faces and cut right through our uniforms.

Huddling together on the sidewalk gave us some warmth since the parade was over an hour late starting. We decided that L.A. must have been leading the

motorcade. "Does any of this look familiar to you, President Bush?"

The parade was miserable. The officials in charge made us take huge steps to keep up with the floats without letting us speed up the tempo. It became almost impossible to stay in step. Several people dropped out from exhaustion.

Back on the buses, tired and freezing, we slept until we got back to the hotel.

Beth has a friend, Joey, from her hometown of Double Springs who is in the Navy and works in the Pentagon. He can't tell us what he does. He came to get Beth, two other friends, and me at 7:00 to show us the sights of Washington.

Joey took us to eat, then we rode around Georgetown and went to the Washington Cathedral. We gawked at the Vice President's house, the White House, and Embassy Row.

We arrived back at the hotel

at 12:00, and I fell asleep immediately despite the loud talking and laughter and people coming and going from our room. I woke up at 1:00 a.m. and talked with Joey and my roommates until 2:00 when Joey left, and we all went to sleep.

Saturday

Saturday, January 21, we were on the buses at 9:30 a.m. I had just finished a breakfast of hot fries and a coke from the vending machines in the lobby. The buses were headed to Washington, and we planned to spend the day in the Smithsonian. Mark Rist, Lee, and I planned out our day on the way, so we wouldn't waste time trying to decide where to go.

We "ooed" and "ahhed" and joked our way through five buildings of the Smithsonian until, exhausted, we decided to go back to the buses to regroup and make plans for dinner.

On the bus, we all discussed plans for the evening. We went back to the hotel and changed, then 17 of us collected in the hotel lobby to take the subway to dinner.

We rode to Tom Sarris's Orleans House where they have \$5.95 prime rib and all the salad you can eat. The food was good. The service was terrible, but the atmosphere and the company more than made up for it.

After dinner, we got back on the subway to go to the hotel. When we changed from the blue line onto the yellow line, we met a couple who had just come from an inaugural party. The man was from Texas and had on a black tux with his brown cowboy boots. I hear it's the new fashion in D.C. They had left the party right after the president arrived.

At the airport stop, Les, a trombone player, got on the

subway. He had just gotten back from New York. He spent \$250 by flying up for the day, seeing Cats, riding in a limousine, and then flying back to Washington. I considered buying a one-way plane ticket home so I could miss the action-packed bus trip home the next day.

Back at the hotel, everyone came to our room to watch what was possibly the worst Saturday Night Live ever made. Not only was it not funny, it was sad. Beth fell asleep. Eventually, everybody left, but Kay and I ate, watched TV, packed, and talked until we decided we had better get some sleep before we had to be on the buses at 8:00 a.m. Sunday, January 22.

Sunday

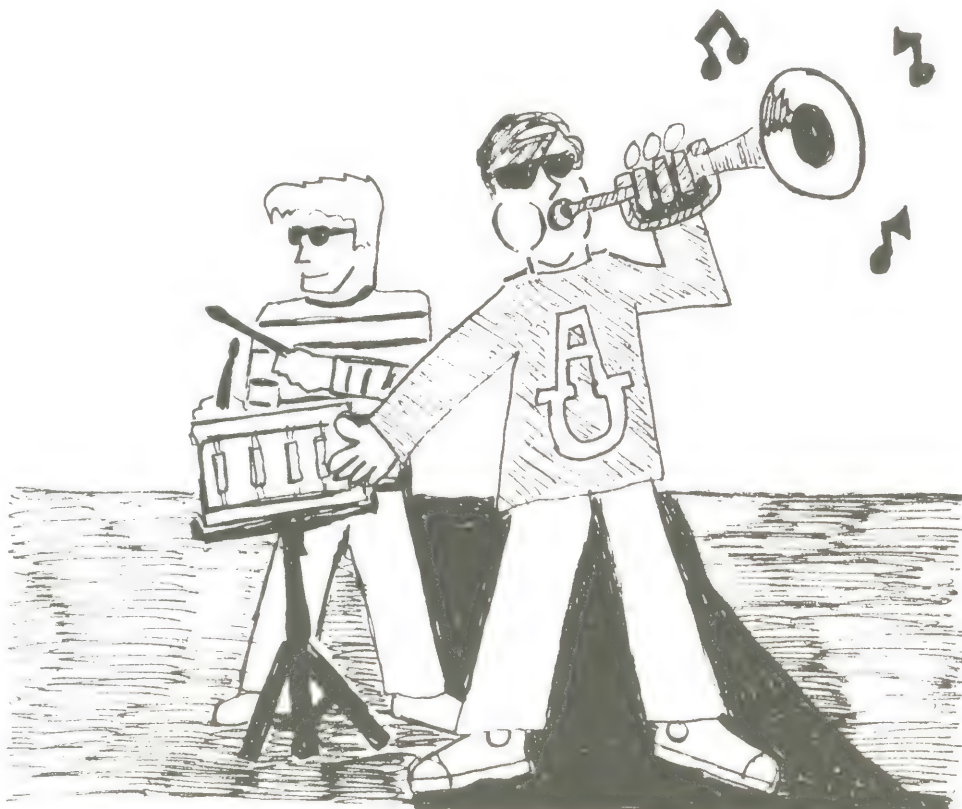
At the meeting before we left Sunday morning, Dr. Vinson told me and the other bus captains to ask the buses to be quiet so people could study. I told Bus Five. It was predictably ignored.

After all this time on the bus, the bathroom odor had permeated the air all the way up to the front of the bus, where we were. Beth had a Lysol attack before we left, but you can never quite get rid of that smell. It haunted me for days after we got back.

The trip back was pretty quiet, just some studying and a little bus intrigue. On a trip that long, it is much easier for everyone to be comfortable if girls sit with guys and guys sit with girls. Some people just can't seem to get it worked out. Mark kept calling me to the back of the bus to try and arrange everybody (not him, he's engaged), but our plans only had limited success.

In Charlotte, we got a new bus driver, Earl. We were hopeful because he said he had been pulled over for speeding on the way up, but even he couldn't help our bus keep up with the other seven.

But at least he had personality. Scott, Kay's seat mate, called out



soon after we changed drivers, "Hey, Earl, it's hot in here."

Earl replied, "Take off your clothes."

In Gastonia that night to eat, Earl said, "Y'all don't want to go park with all those other buses. Where do you want to go, McDonald's or Wendy's?" What a rebel. We went to McDonald's and were the first people in line. A possible first for bus five riders.

Back on the bus, Lee, Mark, Scott, and I played Rook. When we finished the card game, our seats had magically disappeared, as they tend to do when people go to sleep on buses. Everyone takes up much more room asleep.

After playing musical bus chairs for a while, Lee and I headed back to the front of the bus and cleared ourselves our usual seat with Rita, like on the way to Washington, four full days earlier.

In Atlanta, we still hadn't been to sleep, and we stopped for a bus driver break. L.A. got off to go home; he had been along for the ride. A bus driver from Bus Two boarded for the rest of the trip.

The new bus driver stood in the front of the bus and talked very loudly with Earl all the way through Atlanta and out onto I-85. They discussed bus insurance, drivers in different counties in Georgia, better routes through Atlanta, and other bus driver talk that we on Bus Five really had never wanted to hear. Especially that loudly. At 11:00 p.m. After 15 hours on the bus.

They didn't even seem to get the idea how loudly they were talking when the people in the front seats put their pillowcases over their heads.

Finally, the new bus driver asked, "Are there any seats back there?"

Somebody said, "L.A. was sitting with Jeff."

Some idiot cried, "Jeff's asleep."

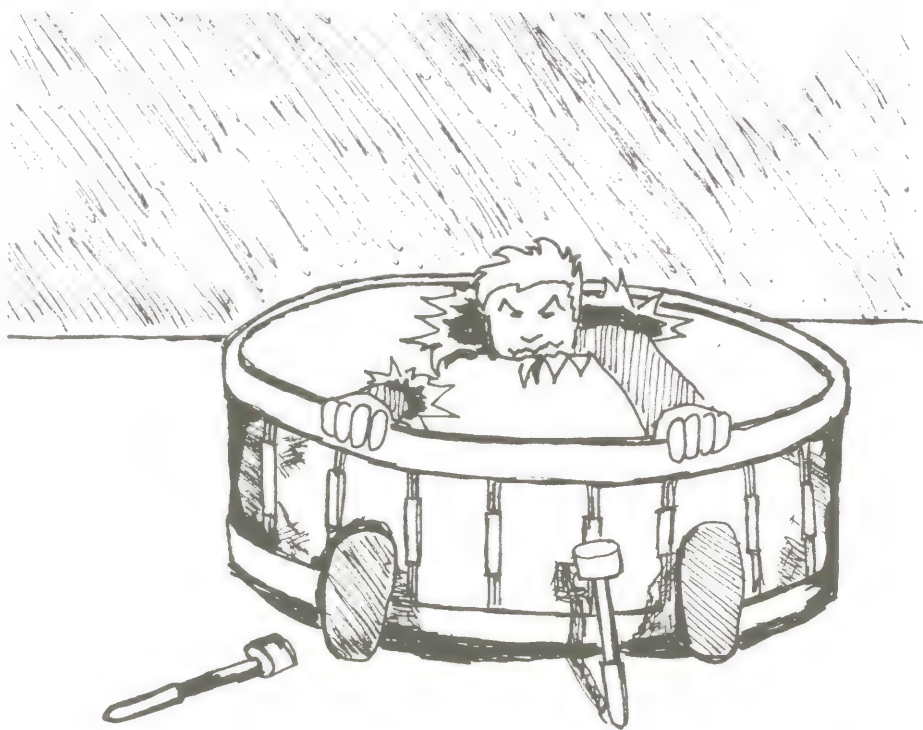
"Well, I don't want to wake Jeff," the bus driver replied considerably.

I turned to Jeff across the aisle from me and began beating him on the arm and screaming, "You're awake, aren't you, Jeff?"

People near by all started calling, "Jeff's awake! Jeff's awake!"

band hall, but I couldn't find it, so I loaded my stuff in Rita's car, and she took me home.

When we got to my apartment, my roommate Donna, a flag carrier that I had hardly seen since Tuesday, informed me that she had seen my car at the band hall after all. Rita and I stood in the kitchen and excitedly related all our adventures until Kay next door beat on the wall and



Tim Frye

Finally it got quiet and I was able to sleep for about an hour in the seat next to Lee with Rita stretched across us. About twenty minutes out of Auburn, I woke up in horrible pain. My neck and back were hurting, and my contacts were stuck to my eyes and burning.

I stood up, half awake, and stumbled to the back of the bus to sit with Beth and Andrew until we arrived in Auburn at 1:00 a.m. Monday, January 23.

Monday

My parents were to have fixed my flat tire and left my car on Samford Avenue in front of the

screamed, "Shut up!"

Rita took me back to get my car. Then I followed her to the Coliseum to park her car and took her to her dorm.

At 2:00 a.m. I arrived home and began studying for class later that morning. I wouldn't have exchanged the trip for anything in the world, except maybe a plane ticket from Washington to Auburn, but the Inauguration Parade trip was a once in a lifetime experience that I'll always remember. I'll think of Washington every time I eat lunch at 2:30 and supper at 10:30, every time I smell a bus bathroom, and every time I hear "A Horse With No Name".

Mr. Serious Comes Home

by Craig Shealy

Mr. Serious has come home and who knows how long he'll stay. He sees deception on a billboard, smells fear on Sunday mornings, tastes dioxin in his coffee. I am coming to know Mr. Serious, and while I can't say I like to be around him, I can say I ought to be.

Mr. Serious is not at home in my generation. He is out of date, out of fashion. Too starchy, too solemn. Some even say he's ugly to look at, some say horrible. Big, yellow, basset hound eyes brimming with emotion one moment, blazing gray the next, his lips horizon tight in a celibate quiver. Mr. Serious sees everything and that's why he's so scary, and that's why he's so lonely.

I have known Serious only a short time although we grew up together. He was the quiet one; I was the extrovert. He brooded for both of us while I played. Where I succeeded he failed. But both of us knew he was the smart one.

We went to the same college and with diplomatic aplomb, took the same classes: he endured rugby and accounting while I weathered Nietzsche and The Old Testament. I wanted to join a fraternity. "Fraternities," he said, "are plastic pools for philanthropic guppies." I told him he was cynical and bitter. "Better that than superficial and bourgeois," he replied. We had long arguments about it and to settle the score, we attended a party. It was a great party, charged with jolting sexual tension: every breast was a fist pointing at me,

beckoning. I would have gone, too, but I couldn't shake Serious. His dank presence rained its moldy mist everywhere. The party, he said, was shallow, elitist, desperate. It disgusted him. He ruined the evening for me, and in fact, I never could take the dive into that pool, or even get my feet wet.

And so, I try to leave him home on my outings but he insists on going, every time. We go to bars and Serious complains that the lights are too bright, the smoke too thick, the music too loud. He doesn't like dancing or sports or cars. He never says anything about it, but I know he thinks my friends are stupid.

Sometimes, though, Serious laughs with, instead of at us. He really can be funny when he wants. His humor is caustic, savage, it spares no one or no thing. It can soar one moment and meld one distant irony to another. It can plunge down the next scooping up a fistful of excrement in one greasy, steaming hand, squeezing it until it oozes out between his fingers, shaking it over everyone until we writhe in delighted revulsion, hyenas all of us. But right at the apex of hilarity when a true comedian would feast on the laughing ambrosia, Serious would screw up the grammar, and punctuate the brevity with a reference to Dostoyevsky. And it was all wrong. We would turn away and swallow hard, and remark on the potato skins. The long face reappeared, the droopy eyes returned. Mr. Serious would stare out with compassionate contempt. I never forgave him for that.

Once, I stumbled upon him at a party. I had gone out to catch some air and take a leak. I turned to go back in and I saw him, as if for the first time, standing alone outside the ring of cars. He was sneering in toward the lights and muffled shouts and laughter that crackled through the frozen sky. He was heaving great breaths of smoky air. Then jabbing at his left eye, he smeared down with rigid fingers as if to pulverize the offending duct. And then he was gone. I had never seen him like that. It spooked me, and it was a long time before I ventured back inside.

One time we went on a double date. Mr. Serious crouched in back with a sallow coed. I sat up front with her cosmo partner. We passed a bottle of Boone's Farm and watched jets race upstage between blue lights. Mr. Serious was getting animated and I knew he wanted to talk. That was a bad sign. Before he could open his mouth, I asked the girl if she liked to bowl. Serious took the hint, and he stared wide-eyed at me in my rearview mirror and bowled a 185 out of spite.

Once we were with some friends at an exhibit in New York and Serious, as usual, had tagged along. One of our party, a leggy brunette, was admiring Van Gogh's Sunflowers. "Oh," she gushed, fresh from an art appreciation midterm, "the texture distinguishes the artist. Look, look, each petal curls up at the ends, almost as if in full bloom. It must have taken weeks to build up that base with layer upon layer of oil!"

Serious curled a lip, contemplating her coveted cheekbones,

highlighted in red, glistening under the display lights. "Weeks and weeks," he said. "I see what you mean." The brunette might have blushed, her mask sliding south in molten chunks of melted wax. But she just looked past him, like he wasn't even there.

After one of these evenings when we were alone, I screamed "What do you want anyway!"

"The whole world," he said, "or nothing at all." He laughed at that but he knew I knew he was serious. And that's why he kept me around. Sometimes he would just sit, for hours, staring at his fish solving the riddle of its invisible cage, bumping into the answer and forgetting it again. Or he would build a log cabin or a tepee in our fireplace, and then light it and watch it burn violently in youth, steadily at midlife, and hot, hottest of all before death.

"My fire lived thirty years every hour," he told me, as he scattered the cold, gray ashes on his frozen garden, even though I told him they would wash away when the snow melted. And sometimes he would just sit by the hearth, and I, uncomfortable in the silence, and slightly bored would ask, "Watcha doin'?"

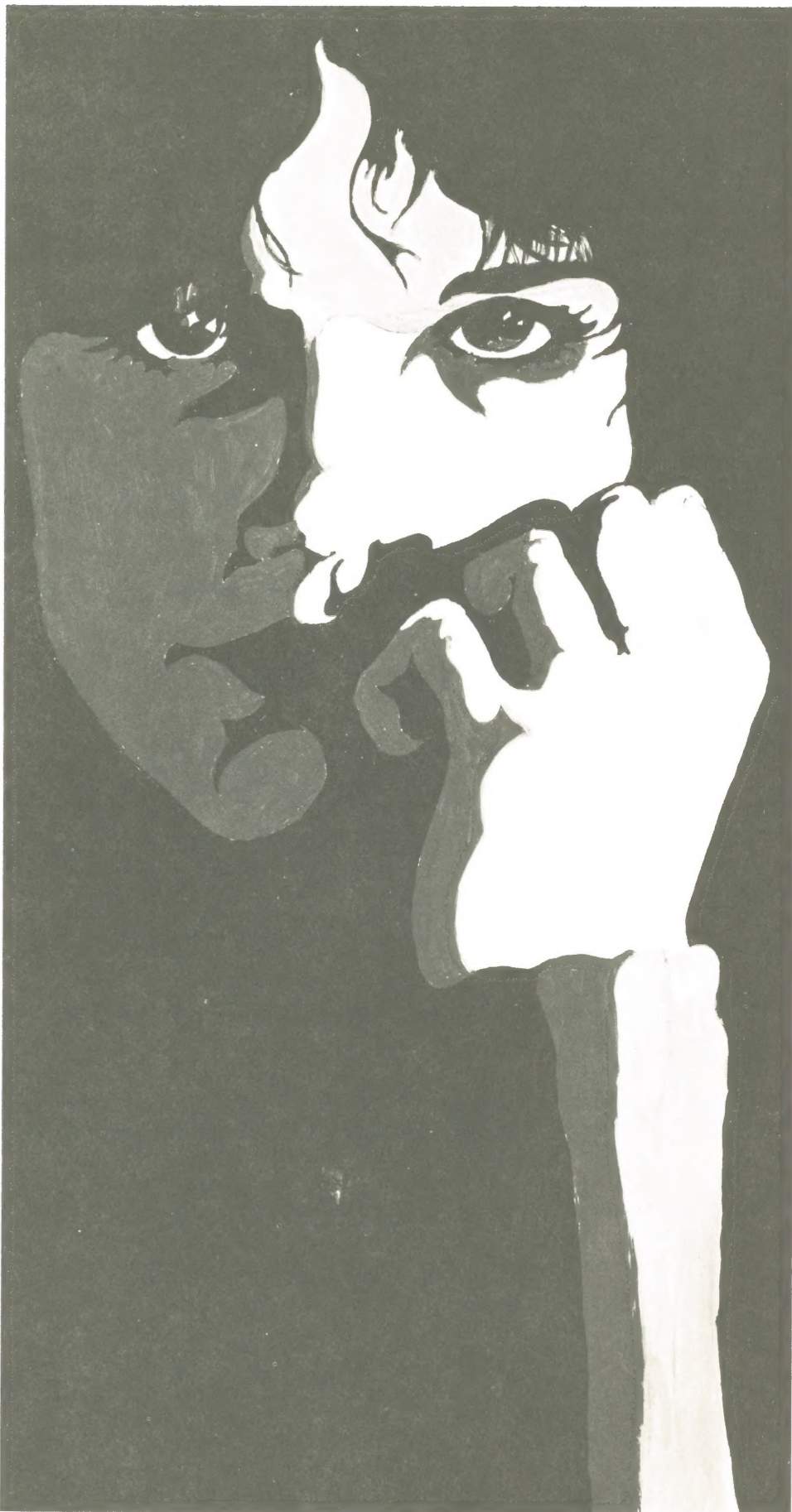
"Waiting."

"For what?"

"When I know that I won't be waiting now will I?"

* * * *

Mr. Serious blew away one October night, as quickly as he had come. I might have seen him go, tumbling over and over in the wind, a pocket-searching scrap, bouncing, soaring to the sky, dashing to the ground. I might have watched him careen down the street, dancing under each spotlight, weeping in the darkness in between, but a French horn blasted him away, for the moment, for the evening at least, if not forever.



Chris Crawford

Contributors

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David Wimberley, a senior in English and also a past editor of The Circle, was the winner of the Sigma Tau Delta Fiction Contest.

